



Radiation Protection and Emergency Response



Why is this program important to Iowans?

Iowans are exposed to low levels of radiation each day due to normal background radiation in the environment, and the common use of industrial and medical radioactive materials and machines.

Any exposure to radiation can increase an individual's risk for developing cancer over time.

Radiation exposures in very large amounts can cause more immediate health effects such as radiation sickness or death.

Iowa has one of the highest rates of indoor radon levels in the country.

Iowans of all ages are at risk for overexposure to ultraviolet light from tanning beds and natural sunlight.

Programs within the bureau work to protect the public and occupational workers from unnecessary exposure to radiation, while allowing for beneficial uses of radiation.

Did you know?

Radiation from natural sources is everywhere, and we are exposed to this background radiation every day. Radiation exposures can also occur from radioactive materials and radiation machines used in industry and medicine.

A focus on health equity

High-quality, consistent images in mammography are essential to finding breast cancer early. One of the functions of the Bureau of Radiological Health is to inspect, test and investigate mammography facilities throughout the state to ensure quality and consistency in adherence with the Food and Drug Administration Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA).

What does the department do?

- Licenses, registers, inspects and investigates issues at facilities that use radioactive materials as an Agreement State to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.
- Inspects, tests and investigates issues at mammography facilities in coordination with FDA and MQSA. The Iowa program annually inspects 142 mammography facilities, including 166 mammography units and 25 stereotactic facilities.
- Inspects, tests and investigates issues at facilities using radiation machines for industrial or medical purposes.
- Issues over 4,000 Permits to Practice for individuals who operate ionizing radiation producing machines or administer radioactive material for medical purposes.
- Coordinates radiation emergency response by working with local, county, state and federal agencies to develop public protection recommendations in case of an incident involving radiation.
- Educates Iowans about radon gas and credentials over 200 radon measurement and mitigation specialists.
- Registers over 450 tanning bed facilities and requires posting of health information about the risks of tanning.



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How do we measure our progress?

- The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) oversees the Iowa radioactive material (RAM) program and conducts an Integrated Material Performance Evaluation Program (IMPEP) review every four years. The Iowa RAM program successfully completed the IMPEP review in August 2017 and received the highest rating of Adequate and Compatible. Due to the outstanding score from the last two IMPEP reviews, the Iowa RAM program was granted an approval extension and will be evaluated again in 2022.
- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversees the Iowa mammography program and conducts an annual review. The Iowa mammography program consistently meets or exceeds the requirements set by the FDA.

What can Iowans do to help?

- All Iowans can make themselves aware of the possibility of exposure to radiation, especially from indoor radon concentrations and medical procedures.
- All Iowans can report any misuse of radioactive materials or ionizing radiation producing machines by contacting the Bureau of Radiological Health at 515-281-3478 or angela.leek@idph.iowa.gov.
- All Iowans should learn about radon gas and how to test for it in their homes. For more information about radon, visit <https://idph.iowa.gov/radon>.

Resources

	SFY 2018 Actual	SFY 2019 Actual	SFY 2020 Estimate
State Funds	\$89,883	\$86,944	\$91,206
Federal Funds	\$174,216	\$165,419	\$160,654
Other Funds	\$1,750,616	\$1,580,651	\$1,605,567
Total Funds	\$2,014,716	\$1,833,014	\$1,857,427
FTEs	9.97	9.59	10.00